

**ON
TRACK
OFF
ROAD**





JMB

*Jean Michel Bayle and Imogene ride with the Barstow goggle.
Photo: Dimitri Coste*





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31 to go...

A Red Bull KTM sweep began in Michigan and finished in Sweden last weekend as Orange claimed MXGP, MX2 and 450MX wins in the period of 48 hours. Tony Cairoli scooped win No.7 of the year at Uddevalla and the 70th of his career, meaning just 31 more to topple Stefan Everts' supposedly uncatchable record. Cover star Jeffrey Herlings already had 42 wins at the age of nineteen

Photo by Ray Archer

O MX



MotoGP

2 more to go...

The news that Valentino Rossi will grace MotoGP grids and Yamaha promotional material for another two years probably satisfied numerous parties. The multi world champion is excellent proof of how character and personality can equal career longevity. Does he still have the goods to overthrow Marquez? This is the crucial question

Photo by Martin Heath



PLAY







AMA-MX

On the go...

Another double page KTM shot but the manufacturer is clearly doing something right to have both premier FIM and AMA classes under their control. Ken Roczen is looking decidedly more comfortable outdoors for the long run that he did deep into the Supercross campaign. What a year though so far for the German. Does anybody have the same status currently in American racing circles?

Photo by Simon Cudby







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CONSTRUCTION





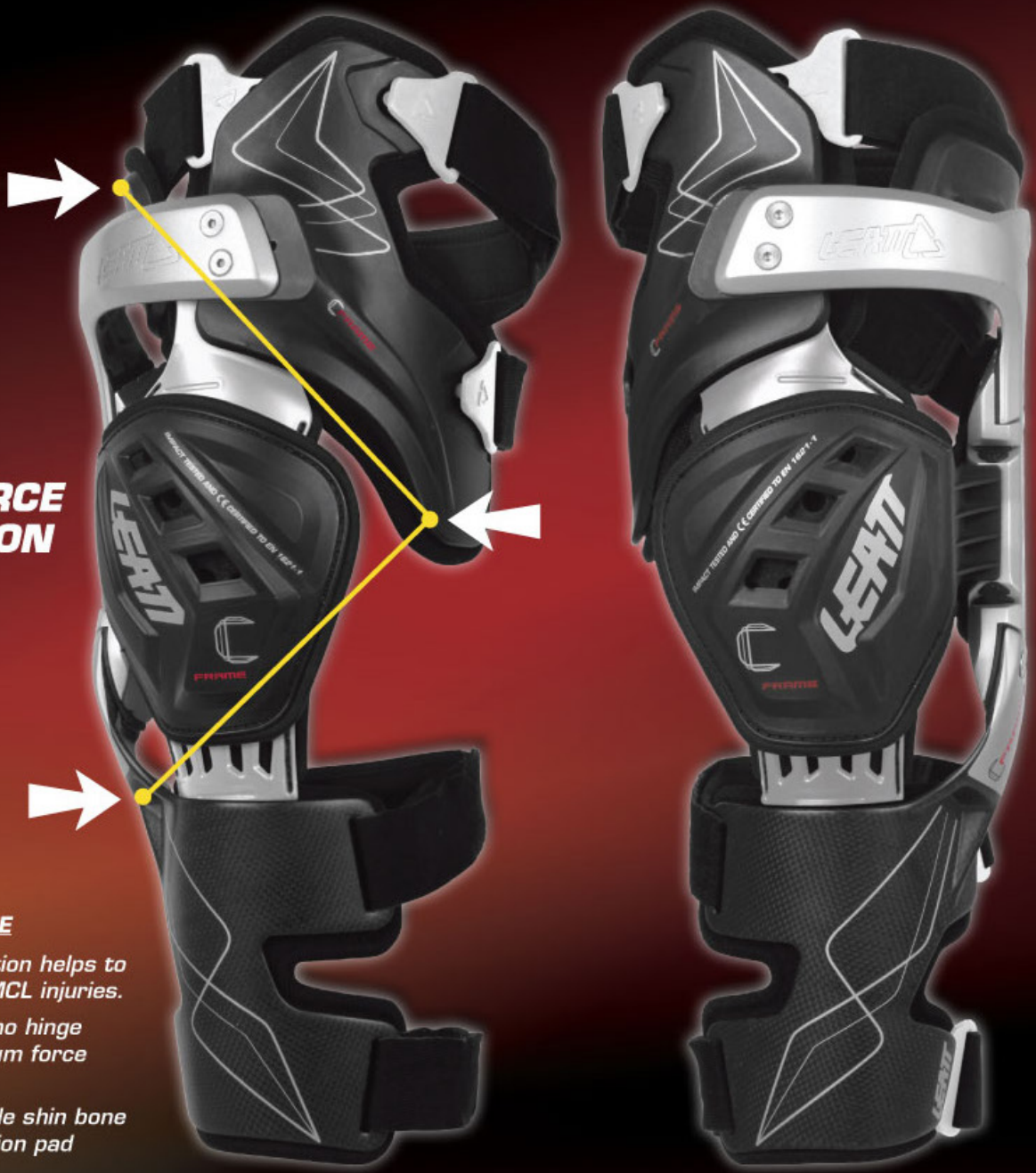
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**MX**

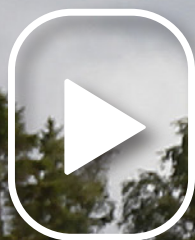
GRAND PRIX OF SWEDEN

UDDEVALLA • JULY 6th • Rnd 12 of 17

MXGP winner: Tony Cairoli, KTM

MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM

Desalle's Suzuki spirals out of the launch of the second moto by itself in what might be the turning point in the 2014 MXGP title story. Holeshots for champ Cairoli opened the door for his Swedish double



PLAY



MXGP SWEDEN

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer



For the second time in last three years the Grand Prix of Sweden has provided an important chapter in the chase for the premier class title of the FIM Motocross World Championship. In 2012 Red Bull KTM's Tony Cairoli suffered a freak double DNF that handed the red plate to his principal rival for the crown since 2010, Rockstar Suzuki's Clement Desalle. The incident prompted Cairoli to fire back in such a way that he only lost one from the next fourteen motos. Last weekend it was Desalle's turn to mark 'Uddevalla' as a black spot. It also showed the devastating propensity for this sport to potentially wreck all the work, hours, results and tension built up over a period of five months in just a couple of seconds.

When Suzuki team-mate – the otherwise strong and impressive – Kevin Strijbos was pushed across the course of several other riders on the approach to the first turn of the second moto it left Desalle, marooned on the inside and already scraping the short banking, with nowhere to go. He cartwheeled with the rest of the pack following. The last time Desalle crashed in such circumstances (the Motocross of Nations) he wrecked his left shoulder and needed four months to recuperate. He was much luckier this time as initial scans at the circuit revealed no breaks and no serious internal damage. The Belgian could barely move through pain in the period after the race and was considering more medical checks. With only days and hours before he has to roll into the paddock for the Grand Prix of Finland it will be a tall ask to expect the Belgian to be able to retaliate against the 32 points Cairoli was able to pull away just through the 48 hours of the Swedish GP alone. The gap was 25 before arrival at the compact circuit north of Gothenburg. Now the Sicilian has a margin of over a GP – 57 points – with five rounds remaining. There is also the matter of Yamaha Factory Racing's Jeremy Van Horebeek acting as a buffer. The other Belgian in this three-way dynamic for the championship, that is not quite as close as neutral fans would like (JVH is ? adrift of the reigning number one), enjoyed his eleventh podium finish in a row in Sweden.

Van Horebeek can run in the top three and as one of the race leaders for an eternity it seems. The 24 year old is the picture of smooth economy on the YZ and has been a powerful force of regularity this season. He rarely pushes to the edge but admitted in Gothenburg airport on Monday morning that he was sore from the motos on Sunday and was over the limit in his er-





70th for Tony who still has another two years contracted to the factory Red Bull KTM team as the rest of the paddock begins the merry-go-round for bikes and places for 2015



ratic first moto where he was part of a trade for positions with Strijbos and Desalle; the former winning the runner-up place behind Cairoli. A few set-up changes and he was back to that same churning efficiency and although he started close to Cairoli in the second moto having stayed wide and clear of the Desalle mess he had little to offer in terms of debunking the champ. Van Horebeek is already making noises about 2015 being his year to really charge. At the moment a top three or runner-up championship finish would be another significant career step. Desalle has accumulated four Grand Prix wins this year which makes 2014 his most 'winningest' since 2011 but some of Van Horebeek's preservation skills would have added to what is already a very potent racing athlete.

Strijbos was partially apologetic for the accident in the post-race press conference but also insisted that he was blameless. The Belgian has been barrelling and aggressive in this second phase of the season and after the first moto and his second place to Cairoli he was the closest he has been to an overall victory since 2007. The combination of the start episode with Desalle and some sand entering his goggles meant that he could do little to push beyond Honda's Max Nagl (the German starting better in Moto2 and was fourth overall) in the dice for third place. Thanks to his relative isolation in fourth position in the MXGP standings (80 points behind Desalle 123 ahead of Shaun Simpson) Strijbos admitted, after celebrating his fifth podium of the season, that vying directly for victory is his primary motivation now from races in Finland, Czech, Belgium, Brazil and Mexico.

After the first moto Van Horebeek was quite staggered by Strijbos' approach to Uddevalla. The circuit had various and immediate new features, such as the reversed direction and new start area, but the varying grip levels and a racing surface that could range from flat and slippery to bumpy and rutty in a matter of metres was the usual head-scratcher. The hard hits from the edges in the soil were responsible for Van Horebeek's aches on Monday but Strijbos just flew through some of the faster and more perilous areas in the first moto that had both of his countryman in the leading quartet stunned in disbelief.



MXGP SWEDEN



42 wins now for Jeffrey Herlings and the wild child tag diminishes with every Grand Prix

While Cairoli described the layout of Uddevalla as “easy” and pointed to the close similarities in lap-times the diversity of feeling and traction provided by the dirt meant the Sicilian’s adjective perhaps wasn’t the most appropriate.

Some solid rides by Tommy Searle, Ken De Dycker and Davide Guarneri on the TM were prevalent in the top ten while Shaun Simpson cut a frustrated figure after rear brake trouble in the first moto, and was distant on the fringe of the top ten in the second after having to test the repaired ‘stoppers’ avoiding the carnage with Desalle.

While the MXGP class undertook some decisive movements, the course to Jeffrey Herlings’ third consecutive MX2 world championship was already being spoken about in terms of when it will be wrapped. Herlings is still unbeaten and emphatically unbeatable on the KTM 250SX-F and was again the now-ritual tour de force in Sweden. With a chasm of 135 points over teammate Jordi Tixier – who confirmed he is ‘sad’ to be leaving the factory team for 2015 but would not reveal the reasons for his departure - Herlings is already eyeing Grands Prix in Czech Republic at the end of the month or Lommel in Belgium and closer to home in the first week of August to launch his party.

Tixier and Honda’s Tim Gajser were the best of the rest. Less so was Monster Energy CLS Kawasaki’s Dylan Ferrandis who produced sufficient speed to chase his third podium finish of the season but he smacked the gate in the first moto and had to claw his way from last back to twelfth. Wilvo Nestaan Husqvarna’s Romain Febvre also had promising pace but two mistakes cast him to fifth behind 2013 European Champion Valentin Guillod; the pacey Swiss must be near the top of several teams shopping lists for MX2 in ‘15.



21,000 spectators was the official attendance figure for the weekend and the track was generously surrounded by fans who have been starved of native motocross success for so long but have several young Scandinavians coming through as well as the regeneration of Husqvarna with the Pierer Group eager to accentuate the brand’s Swedish roots. It was bizarre not to see Uddevalla included on the ‘provisional’ 2015 MXGP calendar (a schedule constructed for an FIM deadline and merely a rough guideline for what may happen and when for the coming year). The circuit and club have been part of the GP slate since 2001 and are apparently in negotiations to again take their traditional early July slot.

A good showing in Sweden for Ken De Dycker (left) despite the fact that the Belgian regularly loses feeling in his left hand due to the plate inserted in his wrist. An op would end the year for Keeno



PLAY



Valentin Guillod rides his luck as well as Jeffrey Herlings' fender at the start of the first moto. The Swiss will be one of the premier athletes in MX2 in 2015



Another costly mistake ruined Dylan Ferrandis' chances of a podium. Like Guillod, Ferrandis is one to look at firmly for 2015. He has already made a step-up this year and should vie for the position of CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki team leader next season...allegedly next to the incoming Jordi Tixier



Adam Sterry and Nick Kouwenberg took moto wins in EMX250 while Ben Watson (below) wore the expression of a floored boxer after a rock smashed his face in the first moto. Two rounds left for the Europeans

Where next for Steven Frossard? His best bet would be to remain with KRT although with Villopoto incoming, his seat could be taken by Tyla Rattray



MXGP SWEDEN



PLAY

A magnificent season for Van Horebeek continues. He was forced to push to the edge in the first moto but was quicker with less risk to second place in Moto2. What price a win for the Belgian?



A good recovery for Max Nagl. After a miserly first moto he was third in the next. Two seasons with the factory Honda seems to be enough for the German who is being pulled away by the lure of a multi-year deal with Husqvarna and would mean a realliance with Red Bull

MXGP SWEDEN





Strijbos and Desalle. The first moto saw a good tussle between the Belgians for second position, won by the former. The pair got a little too close for comfort at the start of the second race. Both will be in Suzuki colours again in 2015 and in terms of speed and performances the Rockstar crew easily have the strongest team in MXGP this year so far





Happy days for Gajser with
a third podium of the year

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MXGP OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
2	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	Yamaha
3	Kevin Strijbos, BEL	Suzuki
4	Max Nagl, GER	Honda
5	Tommy Searle, GBR	Kawasaki

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Tim Gajser, SLO	Honda
3	Jordi Tixier, FRA	KTM
4	Valentin Guillod, SUI	KTM
5	Romain Febvre, FRA	Husqvarna

MXGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 12 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	527
2 Jeremy Van Horebeek	482
3 Clement Desalle	470
4 Kevin Strijbos	390
5 Shaun Simpson	267

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 12 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	544
2 Jordi Tixier	409
3 Arnaud Tonus	389
4 Romain Febvre	388
5 Dylan Ferrandis	372

13th place in the first moto was the best Dean Ferris could do in his MXGP debut and with the 350FC Husky. It was the Australian's first MX race for nine months though and since the Motocross of Nations



REVOLVING DOORS...

By Adam Wheeler

Gautier Paulin's decision to leave the confines of the factory Monster Energy Kawasaki Racing Team and a largely French set-up built around him for an HRC saddle for the next two years is the biggest and most eyebrow-raising move of the MXGP silly season. Kawasaki Motor Europe Racing Manager Steve Guttridge commented at the Italian Grand Prix three weeks ago that he would be "surprised and disappointed" if Paulin – one of just four riders to have beaten Tony Cairoli in the last three years - would leave the KRT squad that he joined in 2012. The Briton demonstrated both emotions at Uddevalla in Sweden last weekend just two days after Paulin had personally made calls informing the suitors for his services as well as partners that are affected by the transfer (Honda have a gear deal with Fox for 2015).

For HRC – already one of the bigger racing operations in the paddock from this year and with a healthy budget to secure the right personnel – it is a major coup. They have not had a rider of Paulin's stature and potential (a recognised Grand Prix winner in the premier class) since Josh Coppins towards the middle of the last decade. At one stage the motocross section of the Honda Pro Images press server was attracting downloads of more photographic material than MotoGP thanks to the New Zealander's presence as a title threat against Stefan Everts and co. With representatives like Rui Goncalves,

Evgeny Bobryshev and Max Nagl (the latter two still in the running for the second saddle next to Paulin) Honda had fast but promising rather than proven talent. With 'GP21' they have reached for the next level with a contract that apparently makes the Frenchman the best paid racer in MXGP.

The investment in Paulin is still one of 'possibility'. He has taken fourth, third and fifth position finishes in the last three years of Grand Prix racing and needs to demonstrate the consistency and longevity to pose a valid title threat. His capacity to win races is without doubt but HRC will be banking on the bigger prize. Gautier is imminently marketable; a presentable personality and face for MXGP and one that the fans seem to embrace. His loss to Monster Energy will be a tough one but in this respect the principal sponsor of the championship and Kawasaki could be poised to strike back.

The MXGP stage has become slightly better lit for AMA star Ryan Villopoto. RV has made all the right noises about contesting Grand Prix and hinting of the demands of a relentless super-cross/motocross/training term. The hitch of his final year with Kawasaki Motor Company (U.S) and various partners there could be less of an obstacle if the rider is thinking of changing the direction or duration of his career anyway.



Kawasaki admit that both Japan and Europe are alive to the chances of how best to utilise their prized asset in the final year of his deal in green. Kawasaki U.S. are not dealing with the possibility of Villopoto leaving their jurisdiction until a request comes from the rider himself and there is now more urgency for this to be decided with KRT suddenly light for their MXGP line-up.

On another subject it was dismaying to read the (rather) definitive statement from the J-Race Racing Team on Joel Roelants on Friday that the damage from his broken vertebrae after a crash at the Italian Grand Prix has left permanent repercussions. There was already talk of more safety discussions (the unfortunate consequence of any serious crash in any motorsports is always a renewed effort for improvement) and rumours of a campaign towards a regulation for riders to wear back protection in Grand Prix.

It was still tough news to hear of the 24 year old's situation. Roelants was always a rider that pushed hard and gave all he had, sometimes too much in the quest to better himself. He was still one of Belgium's young elite with several years ahead to show his prospective on the bigger bike after taking an MX2 Grand Prix win in Latvia in 2012. The racing section of his career in motocross is now over but it is hard to imagine that same fiery attitude limiting his possibilities in life.



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When American firm 6D emerged with their Omni-Directional Suspension system for helmets and a revolutionary new approach to liner construction and impact resistance at the Motocross of Nations last year we were impressed and covered the technology in OTOR #67. We weren't the only ones. The lids can be found on the heads of Kemea Yamaha duo Petar Petrov and Luke Styke in MX2 Grand Prix, Geico Honda's stars in the AMA and of course with Mr Motocross himself.

"I have been racing for so long and the only developments I really saw with helmets was that they got lighter, and that was it," the Belgian said to OTOR. "There were not really any new ideas coming along to help with concussion and possible brain damage. Bob Weber [Founder/CEO] got in contact a year ago to talk about a new concept helmet and explained the history and how he came up with the idea. I listened to him and looked into the philosophy he was bringing into the helmet and I was sold right away. It is something completely new."

"I liked that there was focus on reduction of forces to the head. If you come off the bike really hard then nothing is going to protect you but the 6D helmet seems to improve your chances. I was impressed. I was also thinking of my son [Liam], who is riding more and more, and I wanted the best protective gear for him. I'm really happy to have started this collaboration."

We don't seem to recall you changing helmet brands too many times in your career...?

I'm quite a loyal guy so I haven't been using that many. Bieffe was one, Lazer another and then Airoh. When the carbon-fibre lid came out it was all the rush as all the brands seemed to be trying to lose weight from their products. Are they still safe? The research shows that they are. Lazer used injected moulded shells and I think those shells were even better.

A helmet must be part of your kit that you take for granted sometimes. Was there a moment in your career when you were grateful for the protection you had...

I remember I had a really big crash in 1992 at Nismes [Belgium]. I was 'out' for eight or nine hours and had a big concussion. This was just before I had the spleen injury in Germany. The helmet had a lot of damage...but the technology behind the construction of a helmet was not something I thought too much about. When I heard what the 6D system does – with the dampers and the liner that can move – then it just seems so logical. In a way it appears simple and it is strange that nobody really came up with it in the last twenty years. Maybe now these helmets are on the market then some more new ideas will follow. It is a big thing. There are many concussions in our sport and plenty of examples of riders suffering for a long time afterwards with the effects when it comes to sight and other matters. When you are young you don't really think or care about it.



D

FEATURE

EVERTS & 6D



The problem with using new protective gear is that you are never really want to test its effectiveness...!

Some have tested it! 6D have shown me some 'used' helmets already from the States because the guys like to have the products after a crash and be able to study them. I saw the Zach Bell lid and then one with a crack in the first EPS foam. Everything needs to crack; otherwise the helmet is too strong. I don't really want to test it but I cannot help but think it is an important step forward.

There are so many helmets to choose from now. It must be a massive tendency for people just to go for the nicest colour or coolest shape...

I think the priority for 6D was to get the concept finished into production and get the helmet out there. When you are young then the colour and 'look' seems like it is important but the safety side must not be forgotten and for me now – at this time in my life – it is the number one factor. Over time the [6D] designs and colours schemes will get better and better. To start up a company like this from zero was a hell of a job and they are growing fast because there has been a lot of interest. There are other sports and discipline that could benefit from their work also.

6D'S WEBSITE IS INCREDIBLY INFORMATIVE. NOT ONLY IS THERE A COMPREHENSIVE FAQ ABOUT HOW THE TECHNOLOGY WORKS – FOR EXAMPLE THE HELMET WEIGHS 1.5 KILOS WITH THE ODS SYSTEM COMING IN AT JUST 108 GRAMS – BUT A NUMBER OF ESSAYS AND STUDIES ON CONCUSSION AND SOME OF THE REFERENCES THE COMPANY HAVE USED IN THEIR EXHAUSTIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. TO SEE AND READ MORE CLICK ON THE LOGO



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AMA-MX

RED BULL REDBUD NATION

REDBUD MX (MI) • JULY 5th • Rnd 6 of 12

450MX winner: Ken Roczen, KTM

250MX winner: Jeremy Martin, Yamaha

KEEP ON ROCKING

By Steve Matthes, Photos by Simon Cudby

NAL

AMA MX REDBUD



PLAY

Roczen almost out of shape but in control during practice at RedBud and quickly dialling into the track; his first time on the 450

REEEEEDDDBUUUUDDDDDD!!!! This is the sound that echoes everywhere on this weekend at the Redbud Track-N-Trail located in Buchanan, Michigan around the July 4th weekend. Being anywhere on the national holiday where America celebrates its independence is quite a trip involving fireworks, booze and all-out debauchery. When you add in a once-a-year motocross national to the date, well, things have a tendency to get out of hand.

If there's one American national that people should try to attend then it's Redbud. The place is packed, the track is always one of the best one of the year and everyone is in a good mood. How bad does it get for campers? There's actually a separate fenced-in 'lot' basically without rules. If you're there to party, that zone is for you. For people who want to get some sleep, take some children, etc, etc then you go to the 'normal' lot. There's a bunch of amateur racing on the track the day after the national and the day before there's a floodlit session that goes until late in the night (or early in the morning as it were).

Nope, nothing like Redbud and hanging out with 15,000 of your closest friends. If you manage to make it out to the track for the actual race, you're treated to Larocco's Leap jump which is perhaps the biggest on the circuit and the views of each side of the track are great. Simply put Redbud around the fourth of July is the place to be if you're a motocross fan.

Here are some thoughts on the latest, greatest national in Michigan:

-Kenny Roczen (more on him in my blog) simply dominated the 450MX class and seeing as how Redbud represented the halfway point of the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships, it seems that Roczen and his now 26-point lead appears to be the favorite to bring home his first American motocross title. Roczen's charge in the first moto was impressive as he ripped through the pack passing all of his main contenders for the title and taking off. Redbud was a statement win for Roczen and showed that he doesn't need the holeshot to do well. Last





Last week he fell twice and still finished a close second in the first moto - this week he just rode away to go 1-1. Momentum, thy name is Kenny Roczen.

-Jeremy Martin had seen his lead of two races in the standings chopped and hacked down to less than ten points. The sophomore rider needed to do something to stop the Blake Baggett train as the former national champion had won four out of the last six motos. Late in the first sprint Baggett was charging and reeling in the leader Martin. This was the race within the race: would Baggett be able to 'break' Martin and show the kid that the new boss is the same as the old boss?

The answer was no. Martin picked it up in the last two laps and pulled away to take his first win since the second race of the year. And with that, Jeremy Martin stole the thunder back from the other riders that thought he was fading a bit. In the second moto Martin was trying to be aggressive and get around early leader Justin Bogle when his teammate Cooper Webb zapped him. After Bogle crashed, Martin was unable to get back by Webb but the overall was his. Combined with Webb's crash-induced bad first moto and Baggett's poor second moto, Martin re-established a nice points lead with six races left. The Yamaha rider finally pushed back the bullies this weekend.

-Oh what could have been for Eli Tomac. Tomac missed the first four rounds with an injury but since his return at the last two rounds he's showed a lot of speed. Like Roczen, Eli's a bit more at home in the outdoors and you can tell with some great rides. He's jumped right into the top mix and at Redbud he went 4-2 for second overall. Tomac's supercross season was so-so, he fought a bit with his bike and he ended up on the ground more than he would like but there were some impressive performances in there like New York and Seattle. So far outdoors Tomac has shown he's got the speed and the fitness to run with the leaders. There's always been a stigma about Eli and his Honda not gelling and there's some truth to that as his set-up seems to vary. Right now Tomac's going with the factory Honda chassis set-up with spring Showa A-kit forks. Whatever it is that he likes at this point, it's definitely working for the #3.

-The injured defending 450MX champion and four-time 450SX champion Ryan Villopoto showed up at Redbud to do some commentating in the booth. Villopoto's been on the mend from yet-another ACL surgery on the knee and is contemplating a future that is dirt bike free. He's got another year on his Kawasaki deal over here but in my opinion I don't think there's any way he will race in America next season. Year after year we hear from people in Europe that this rider or that rider is heading to the Grand Prix's to race and 99% of the time it's someone's imagination running wild. In this case though, the 'Villopoto-to-Europe' rumors definitely have some traction. He's sold his Florida property and rumours are he's selling his California property as well so it's looking like there will be no racing in America next year. There's nothing done in terms of RV heading over there but in my opinion, he'll either retire with his legacy as an all-timer firmly established or he'll head to Europe to see the world and race the 450MX, err, MX1, errr whatever they're calling it now over there.

-Want to look pretty smart with all your buddies? Tell them that the 2015 250MX champion is going to be Justin Bogle of the GEICO Honda team. Yeah, that's right: I said that. Bogle's been very good this year and it wouldn't surprise me if he got a win before 2014 is out. Martin and Webb will be strong but Bogle is coming on as well. He needs a bit more seasoning and experience but he seems to be on the right track for 2015 (his last year in the 250 class) to be his year.

-Marvin Musquin has been a bit under the radar here lately. The two-time MX2 World Champion won a couple of nationals last year and certainly took a step up. But unfortunately for Marvin injuries struck and he missed the entire supercross season and came into the outdoors not at 100%. At Redbud though we saw some of the old Musquin magic as he came from the back in a couple of great rides. At times in the first moto he was the fastest rider on the track before bizarrely getting his left foot caught in his own tire! He regrouped and finished a strong second overall. Don't sleep on Musquin getting an overall here before the season is up.



Different approaches to the jump but almost perhaps symbolic of the varying confidence and circumstances for competition between James Stewart and Ken Roczen at the moment



AMA MX REDBUD





AMA MX REDBUD

Cooper Webb chooses a rut at RedBud on what was another strong weekend of speed and results for the Yamahas in 250MX



In terms of the 450MX Championship Ryan Dungey has been here before. The former number one knows he has to keep posting the results and remain poised for the slip to come from his team-mate. Half a season in the bag and plenty of laps ahead. Roczen and Christophe Pourcel (last page) know full well how just a single bad moment or moto can wreck a whole campaign







AMA MX PRO MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

450MX RESULT

Riders

1	Ken Roczen, GER	KTM
2	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
3	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
4	Trey Canard, USA	Honda
5	Andrew Short, USA	KTM

450MX STANDINGS (AFTER 6 OF 12 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Ken Roczen	280
2 Ryan Dungey	254
3 Trey Canard	226
4 James Stewart	196
5 Brett Metcalfe	168

250MX RESULT

Riders

1	Jeremy Martin, USA	Yamaha
2	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM
3	Jason Anderson, USA	KTM
4	Blake Baggett, USA	Kawasaki
5	Cooper Webb, USA	Yamaha

250MX STANDINGS (AFTER 6 OF 12 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeremy Martin	250
2 Cooper Webb	227
3 Blake Baggett	222
4 Justin Bogle	191
5 Marvin Musquin	181



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This past weekend Red Bull KTM rider Kenny Roczen went out on RedBud, a track that's as American as they get, and swept the two motos in the 450MX class. It was quite a display by the German and he put more points on the field in his chase to get his first American national motocross title. Kenny showed everyone that he's the guy this summer and as others fall back or be a bit inconsistent he's strong every moto.

It's really remarkable to me what he's doing here. At RedBud he came from around tenth to first in the opening five laps and it was game over from there. In the second moto Honda's Trey Canard played the role of spoiler for a bit but in the end the former MX2 World Champion was too fast and too strong.

With the defending champion in the class present and calling the action on TV due to injury Roczen showed that his move to Villopoto's compound in Florida to start this maiden voyage in the 450 class was indeed a very smart one. Throughout Roczen's career the friendly, personable kid liked to reach out to his massive social media following on Instagram and Twitter and talk about his trips to Chipotle burrito restaurant or In-N-Out Burger. He told me one time that these tweets aren't stopping him from winning any races and he didn't want to be a robot like so many other racers out there.

He also didn't win the 250MX outdoor title in any of his two years here. Although to be fair he was close last year until a crash knocked him out of the running at Millville.

Seeking some guidance, Roczen hired Villopoto's trainer Aldon Baker for this season, packed up and moved to central Florida where it's secluded from, well pretty much everything. The workdays are long and strenuous but it's paid off for Roczen in terms of some 450SX wins and now, without Villopoto there, a slow grind to the

top in motocross that I imagine leaves his competitors wondering what happened.

The buy-in by Roczen has been remarkable, he's as fast as he's ever been and outdoor motocross comes easier to the kid that grew up on it. He admitted that near the end of supercross he was wearing down a bit. The week after week grind getting to him. When I asked him about that - and if he felt that way outdoors - he said no because he knows how to ride motocross, he's more relaxed and it shows out there.

And if he manages to win this outdoor title it's got to be bittersweet for the KTM team as it appears that Kenny's going to take that number one plate and move it right over to the RCH Suzuki tent. Roczen's leaving on good terms. He just felt like he wanted to try another bike and he spent years on a Suzuki and knows he can get it working just right. Although it appears there's nothing wrong with the orange machine right now as he and team-mate Ryan Dungey have made the 450SXF work pretty damn well.

Roczen's rise to the top in American moto (and perhaps American supercross as soon as next year) isn't surprising to me. I remember seeing him in his native Germany in 2009 where he went 2-2 for the overall and being very impressed. The kid's aggressive, he's got almost perfect style and now he's 'all-in' with the off-the-bike work to complete the package. If I were an OEM, CEO of a gear company - heck any sort of boss of any company associated with the sport of motocross - Kenny Roczen is the rider who's future appears to be limitless and I would want to sign him up. Sure he's not American but his English is perfect, he's a friendly, outgoing, well-mannered kid and above all, he's very, very fast. Get ready America, Kenny Roczen is the future and this past weekend in RedBud, he showed that there's really no stopping him.



NO SHO

Some see life as a challenging track
toward success, glory and podiums.
Some just see a track.

▶ ADAM CIANCARULO

RT CUTS



MOTOGP

WET N' WILD

ON THE EVE OF THE ENI MOTORRAD GRAND PRIX DEUTSCHLAND MARC MARQUEZ IS CLOSE TO DOUBLE FIGURES FOR 2014. AT ASSEN, HOLLAND, THE CHAMPION DEFIED THE DAMP AND DOVIZIOSO TO POST WIN NUMBER EIGHT

Photos by Martin Heath www.martinheathphoto.com
Stats by Dr Martin Raines

A close-up, high-action shot of MotoGP rider Marc Márquez celebrating his victory. He is wearing his signature red helmet with '1st' in yellow, and his orange and white Repsol Honda racing suit. He is wearing goggles and has a wide, joyful grin as a spray of white liquid (likely champagne) is being poured over his face. The background is blurred, showing other riders and the track environment.

MotoGP ASSEN

Marquez gets soaked for posting
Honda's 101st victory in MotoGP
(since the class became so in 2002);
twenty wins ahead of Yamaha



PLAY

Ducati were buoyed by Dovizioso's performance. The Italian benefitted from the slick conditions and a fantastic start. A week later and he was in Sweden to watch MXGP





A double for Honda and Alex Marquez in Moto3 (right) in what was the 84th running of the Dutch TT





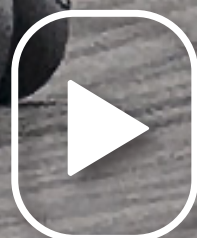
Different Assen experiences for Scott Redding and Pol Espargaro (top right) this year compared to their last lap charge for Moto2 victory in 2013. The Brit was 12th and Espargaro the only crashee. Rumours continue about concerning Cal Crutchlow's future at Ducati...





The Dutch fans filled the spectating zones and came prepared for all weather conditions. Aleix Espargaro (left) could not be doing any more to get into contention for a factory ride. The Catalan was again the best of the Open class at Assen for the second year in a row

MotoGP ASSEN



PLAY

The pressure is beginning to mount again on the security of Stefan Bradl's seat at LCR. This year there is no Laguna Seca to re-energise his status with HRC (SBK is there instead in July) but the German's home GP next at Sachsenring would be a good place to start that period of justification once more and buy some time



TRADING TWEETS...

By Matthew Roberts

There's a great story from World Superbike folklore that is retold whenever a good rivalry begins to emerge in the series. It involves Carl Fogarty, Pierfrancesco Chili and a dressing gown – I'm sure you've heard the rest. As the current season approached the halfway point in Malaysia a few weeks ago a similar incident occurred in the Kawasaki garage. No confirmation of a dressing gown this time but Tom Sykes certainly gave his team-mate Loris Baz a dressing down after the fervid young Frenchman took the series leader out in race one, allowing Marco Melandri to claw back major points in the championship. To add injury to insult, Sykes damaged his hand and leg in the process, although that didn't stop him lunging for his team-mate after the race.

"If he doesn't want to talk to me, that's his problem," remarked Baz with a gallic shrug when questioned about the spat at the next round in Misano, showing no inclination to help Sykes retain his title – understandably so, you could say, given that Baz remains one of the Yorkshireman's main rivals for the crown with half of the season still to go. Sykes, however, showed that he needs little help as he powered to his third double victory of the season and it's a good thing too because when it comes to back-up the current World Champion seems short of options on the current grid – as a 'playful' Twitter exchange suggested in the build-up to Portimao.

I should mention at this point that a tiff between Sykes and Rea reportedly started during testing at Jerez, when the Kawasaki man refused to give his Honda rival a tow and backed off to the farcical point that the pair of them ended up having a 'slow race' down the straight before Sykes pulled in. Words were exchanged in pit-lane between Sykes and Rea's crew chief Chris Pike and when Rea came back in the riders had a little tete-a-tete of their own.

So, when Pike last week posted a link to an article quoting Sykes as saying that the undulations of the Portuguese circuit are 'almost a little bit over the top', along with the comment 'Really??', he (inadvertently or otherwise) lit the Twitter touch paper...

@jonathanrea @cp_rac1ng mmmmmm at least he has stopped moaning about his team mate!

@eugenelaverty @jonathanrea @cp_rac1ng Subject of next safety meeting: HILLS. Do we really need 'em? Get Laguna on the phone, tell them to level the place.

@TheRealTomSykes @eugenelaverty @jonathanrea @cp_rac1ng Keep bitching ladies.!

@eugenelaverty @TheRealTomSykes @jonathanrea @cp_rac1ng In all seriousness, what are we gonna do about these hills? I had a look today. Still there :-)



@TheRealTomSykes @eugenelaverty @jonathanrea @cp_racIng ..Hills here all weekend at Portimao!! Will you still complain about "engine braking" then??

@eugenelaverty @TheRealTomSykes @jonathanrea @cp_racIng More like "engine breaking" in race 1 here last year JR! It didn't kerb our enthusiasm for race 2

@TheRealTomSykes @eugenelaverty @jonathanrea @cp_racIng ...Yee-hah,, I've got one on the hook here!!! She's a fighter!! I suppose it really grates on you! x

@chazdavies @TheRealTomSykes @eugenelaverty @jonathanrea @cp_racIng you need to rise above this Tom. Let's all kick our differences to the kerb...

@eugenelaverty @TheRealTomSykes @jonathanrea @cp_racIng HILLarious but what a mountain of a molehill.Climb above it Tom, summit that podium!

@realleonhaslam A few laps around the track today I can't believe it all the hills are still there.. @TheRealTomSykes what are we going to do about it.. Lol

@TheRealTomSykes @chazdavies @eugenelaverty @jonathanrea @cp_racIng @realleonhaslam ..WSBK full of British and 1 Irish comedians! I'll let you boys carry on.

@eugenelaverty @TheRealTomSykes @chazdavies @jonathanrea @cp_racIng @realleonhaslam Wait, wait, wait... you forgot @christianiddon. #6men1rod1fish

@realleonhaslam @eugenelaverty @TheRealTomSykes @chazdavies @jonathanrea @christianiddon everyone should just get along as life is all about ups and downs

Of course a lot of this 'banter' was tongue in cheek but many a true word is said in jest and Sykes certainly feels there is some schoolyard jealousy in the paddock towards his success. From the outside it does at least seem the rest of the Brit pack like to wind him up when given the opportunity.

On this occasion 'The Grinner' had the last laugh, delivering a third straight win from pole position and setting up what looked likely to be a fourth double of the season in race two before the rain came over lunch, allowing Rea in to take a brilliant fourth win of the season and keep alive his slim title hopes. However, if Rea and the rest can't find some consistency in the dry then Sykes will be calling for his dressing gown, pipe and slippers before the season is out.



FEATURE

A WORD EDGEWAYS

CATCHING UP WITH BT SPORTS REPORTING TEAM GAVIN EMMETT AND NEIL HODGSON; THE LATEST MICROPHONE WIELDERS IN THE MOTOGP PITLANE AND PADDOCK

By Adam Wheeler, portraits by JP Acevedo, other photos by Martin Heath



BT SPORT: EMMETT & HODGSON



British fans of MotoGP have been tested and treated since new channel BT Sport purchased the live rights to the sport last year. The move to corner Grand Prix from the BBC initially split opinion but there is little doubt that the standard of coverage has raised the bar for MotoGP in the UK. There is now more depth, variety and up-to-minute analysis and information from the events themselves than ever before. With elements like the MotoGP Tonight show then motorcycle racing and biking generally is receiving a timely boost.

We know because we purchased a subscription and have been following it when MXGP commitments haven't clashed.

OTOR's own Gavin Emmett is fulfilling the role of 'doyen' of MotoGP with almost fifteen years as a reporter, journalist, commentator and presenter in the paddock while ex-SBK Champion Neil Hodgson is now involved with top level racing again in a capacity he admits he never anticipated.

Now half way through BT's (and production company North One) initial season in MotoGP we grabbed exclusive reactions from both on how the launch has been running and received from their different positions and perspectives of the job at hand.

Gav, explain the initial set-up and how BT have tackled MotoGP exactly...

OK, so BT Sport is the new sports channel and station in the UK and like a lot of channels or broadcasters they get production compa-

nies to make the actual programmes like the football, the rugby and so on. They have gone with North One to produce and make MotoGP because of their track record with the TT but also other things like The Gadget Show and Fifth Gear. Formula One, which I think they won a BAFTA for, and Rally...so it is a company that knows motorsport. It was a big move for the sport in the UK and Dorna [MotoGP commercial rights holder and promoters] to go exclusively with a pay TV channel – although previously it had also only been on Eurosport – and now BT are putting in a lot of resources both financially and also physically with the studio back in London and the MotoGP Tonight show on Tuesday nights. I think they are revolutionising sports TV production in the UK and it is great for MotoGP to be a part of it.

What have been the first reactions from BT on the reception?

They are very happy already with the programming but also the amount of viewers that are watching. Off the top of my head they are peaking at 250-300k per round at the moment and that's not counting the tens of thousands watching through the App. That's just the live show as well. It is about a quarter or almost a third of what was being taken through the BBC and I think that is good for a channel that only launched in August last year. The channel was built in ten months and they are taking on Sky in their own right.

You are part of the furniture in MotoGP...

Thanks! I like to think of myself as an old comfy armchair.

But North One are like the new guys in the paddock. How has the settling in period been?

There are people in the crew that have a lot of motorsport experience already. The Freelance camera guys have been around F1 and Rally so the transition has been easy. On site you have Neil and I. I have not met a rider with so much enthusiasm and desire to learn a new trade. Typically for a rider he has just slotted straight into the role and adapted well. Sometimes it is hard to find a former racer who still has such enthusiasm for the sport. I think people have taken to him more than anybody else on the team. I think with Keith [Huewen], Julian [Ryder], Neil and myself we have faces that are familiar in the paddock and it makes for a

pretty strong line-up. James Toseland is back in the studio and has been mixing and matching with other guests. I thought Scott Smart was brilliant when he came on. I love hearing Jeremy McWilliams' insights as well. It is just about trying to give people different voices and inputs. Matt Birt [long time Motorcycle News MotoGP correspondent] chips in as well with some great knowledge and little snippets of gossip. If I know any inside information then Matt knows twice as much. I think everyone was sceptical of the choices in the beginning because it was a change – and that's something that not many like – but the team has been put together well.



**What do BT/North One bring to each GP?**

I would say they take between 13-14 people to each race. Aside from the presenters and people in front of the camera then you have two cameramen, two floor producers, two sound guys and a senior producer. The main control gallery is back in the studio in London where there is another team of almost thirty; that's what you need to make a studio run. We have a controller with us who cuts up the pictures and audio coming from the track and another who sends across all the footage we are compiling through the weekend. We are always filming VTs and it is all edited back in London. So I would say a crew of around 14 but at Silverstone that could climb up to 40-50 for live broadcasting across the three days and more.

How does that rank in comparison with what you've worked on and also other broadcasters in the paddock?

Well the BBC would sometimes take only four people to a flyaway GP or six including the commentators. You have a presenter like Matt

Roberts, a reporter and then one cameraman and one producer. They wouldn't have sound necessarily. At European rounds this would increase to fifteen or so. BT have gone bigger but they wanted that studio setting for a more direct link back to people in the UK. It would be great to have the whole BT crew on site but that would be a massive undertaking. If you look what Movistar are doing in Spain or Sky in Italy then they are reeling off ten-eleven hours of broadcasting a day and it is too much actually. I was chatting to a few of the guys from those projects and they have endless coverage and some of it starts getting a bit silly. We do all the sessions live and then a show on Saturday and Sunday of about five hours each and I think that is a good amount. People are not missing anything...only warm-up on a Sunday morning. I guess it is the less relevant session of the weekend and the whole London set-up is getting ready at that moment as are we at the track. We go on air twenty minutes after it has finished.

What about other countries?

Apart from the Italians and the Spanish the Germans – Sport1 – are trying but it is one or two people per round...so you could say BT are going hard at it. The Spanish and Italians have big productions but this is to be expected really. When I used to do Speed TV last year – what is now Fox Sports – I just used to have one cameraman and would shoot things with them on Thursday and Friday to make five-ten minute features. It would be edited on site and that would be it. Australia have a studio set-up with Speed but they take the World Feed for the live, so they don't even use their own commentary team. It is obviously hard for people like the Americans and Aussies to cover it on the same level as the Europeans.

So BT are trying to create a wave?

We are trying to make MotoGP feel different to what the viewer saw on the BBC, which was a half hour build-up and then the race. We are trying to make it feel more 'live'. We have the nicely edited pieces included but the goal is that sensation of being right there at the track and this means lots of live interviews with myself and Hodgy running around pit lane and Matt Birt providing the latest information that has popped up that morning. We do have a few of those nice long interviews because people like to see them but the general idea is for friendly, genial, smiley coverage that is fresh and instant and in a way also different to the Sky coverage of F1 that has its own technical aspect. We want it to be accessible but not too focused. Perhaps not as wide as the BBC but not as narrow as Eurosport was. There are a lot of new people – football and rugby fans – subscribing to BT and we know we have to present this sport – that has so much interest and excitement – in the best way to get more viewers. You have to attract people with the drama, the storylines and also the technical side. I'd like to think we are doing some fun bits here and there but most of all people feel like they are on site. We do a postcard piece every day from the race. In Italy it was from outside Valentino Rossi's motorhome and then also the pizzeria where the riders hang out. In

Argentina we did it from a local bar so people would have a sensation of the area.

Is the role any more demanding to what you have handled in the past?

I've done pitlane reporting, I've done commentary and presenting so a little bit of everything and I'm drawing on that now and have built up relationships. I've been interviewing Marc Marquez since he first came into GP. I'm lucky that I'm a familiar face and have been involved for a long time. I'm as busy if not more nowadays because we are covering all sessions. I used to be in the commentary booth for each session, or I was writing, or prepping a script which made getting out in the paddock quite tough. Now, because we all chip into the production, I can be out there a bit more.

Any memorable broadcasting stories?

I liked it when Neil got hold of Cal in Qatar right after he'd had his engine problem. Cal was marching back through the pits but Neil didn't let him get away and Cal was actually fine with it and gave a small interview that was really fresh [read Hodgson's take on it below]. I also got a nice one with Lorenzo at Qatar right after he had crashed out. It was great that he was open to talk rightaway because it was a devastating moment at the first race of the year for him. I enjoyed a chat on camera with Mark Cavendish in Italy last year actually. To hear a top sportsman like that talk about how much he loves MotoGP and how much of a thrill he gets from it is really nice.

BT Sport. Will the model work?

Well you can get it for free, and BT have extended that offer to broadband subscribers for another year. Who knows if that will continue? As a channel they are making a big splash in the sports market, there is no doubt about it. Sky Sports have had to sit up and take notice because the Champions League has gone and that is a massive thing. I think they are up to five millions subscribers now. It has to have legs because it is a huge company. Bundling it all with broadband means they can offer a great package.



GAV ON...

Control tyre...

A good thing. However much some tyre competition would be positive it costs too much and the favourites get singled out because special tyres go to special riders and it makes the gap even bigger.

Marc Marquez starting another Doohan-era...

He is changing the sport, but that is what great champions do. They move it on to another level. They read and analyse everything that has gone before and write a new chapter.

General paddock reaction on the control ECU...

Welcoming. Scepticism at first but people realise that it is something that needs to be done for the show. We don't want it to be run by TV because it is a sport and has its own technical insight but the more attraction, more watchers and more interest means it can move onto another level. I think it is a good thing.

Should there be four races in Spain...

I would prefer three. It is really hard to argue however because they are all very well supported and at excellent facilities. They probably pay over the odds for it as well and that covers other events that don't have as much support.

BT SPORT: EMMETT & HODGSON



**Neil, new role, new demands. How are you coping so far?**

Good! I had not any training so I was in at the deep end coming into the job. At the first round we had the 'live in ten minutes' warning and I suddenly thought 'I haven't had too much practice at this'. I'd done stuff with Eurosport but that involved being sat in a studio and somebody asking you a question about something you know; you can do it in your sleep. The presenting and interviewing has all been new and I've loved it. It is stressful and you are pushing yourself; and I've liked that. Maybe I've missed it from racing which is all about pushing yourself and being a bit uncomfortable! I've been critical of myself and I think I'm 60% there. I still need to learn and improve.

What about being back in the Grand Prix paddock on a regular basis?

It is quite nice because there are a lot of familiar faces. I did not spend that many years here; '93-95 and then 2004, so that's ten years ago. Everyone has been really helpful and I'm surprised how friendly it is. I thought it would be a bit more cutthroat and serious. It hasn't felt like that at all and even speaking with riders

it has come quite easily. I've only had the odd slight moment here and there but otherwise really accommodating. Obviously it is a business and it is well organised and you know that at 4.30 you can be at the Yamaha hospitality to speak to Valentino in front of his media board.

When you were racing did you ever imagine yourself in this position one day?

Not really because when you are racing you are focusing so much on what you are doing. I didn't think too much about life afterwards. It is funny now because I do a lot of track days and teaching as well as this and if somebody had told me back when I was in GP or Superbike that I would be doing this stuff I'd have said 'not in a million years...'

Really?

Yeah. And it is strange really because then you end up enjoying both!

Is it a sign of how self absorbed you have to be to compete at the highest level?

I think so. It is like track days. I would have thought 'who wants to ride around with slow, old people?' but the fact is that it is one of the most rewarding things I have done because

you are teaching people and you can see them getting better. It is social and relaxed. For the TV side I never would have seen myself as a journalist but the truth is that it's a real buzz: live TV, finding stories, getting reactions. I really enjoy it.

There must have been times in your career when you saw someone coming at you with a microphone or a recorder and you thought 'oh, fk off'. Is that in the back of your mind now?**

It is! That's the hardest part of the job. Maybe I would be better at it if I had not raced. It works for and against. There are times when I know I have to ask a question or get an interview but the person does not want to talk to me. It is usually when you have had a bad result and you have that much self-loathing going on that you don't want to speak to anyone! Anyway I have to get on with it, I'm not here to make friends...but it is the part of the job I'm not so comfortable with.

Such as the 'Crutchlow in Qatar' moment... [Hodgson grabbed the Ducati rider walking back up the pitlane after he coasted across the finish line with a broken machine]

The truth of that was I didn't want to speak to him...but I was told to and it was the right thing to do because it was information for the people at home. It was a real lesson for me. It turned out to be good TV because he clearly did not want to talk and was a bit snappy. More people have talked about that than anything else I've done. Don't get me wrong you have to draw the line somewhere.

Your 'Brundle style' gridwalks look chaotic and a bit stressful...

I have a small plan for those but you cannot go into it too much because you don't know who will speak and who won't. You think 'I'll start there and head down to him' but when you get to Scott Redding – for example – he's got his headphones on and his eyes closed behind his sunglasses. You might ask a question and he totally ignores you. You have to make snap decisions because it is live TV and you've got seven minutes, which isn't much. The strange

thing of the gridwalk is the silence when you're moving. You have to keep talking and it feels unnatural chatting to yourself. I enjoy the chaotic side of it because it makes me nervous. I don't know who will talk to me. I've had good feedback. I've watched Martin Brundle's and they are brilliant and mine are not but I'd like to think if I am still doing this in three years time then they will be much better!

What's your overall estimation of the project and scope of the BT production so far?

There is a lot of money being spent by BT and their production company North One and they want to do a really good job. You feel part of a crew; like being in a racing team where everybody has got the other person's back. It sounds clichéd but you 'win and lost together' if we do a good show then we all get a pat on the back. It is a buzz and I love it. I didn't know Gavin before – I'd heard his voice but didn't really know him – and he has been such an ally. He literally knows everybody in the paddock and speaks every language you need to speak here! He has made my job that much easier. I think it is all going well. Joe Punter at home might criticise certain things but generally the feedback I've had has been positive and it will only get better.





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SBK

ROUND 7 PORTIMÃO

PORTIMÃO (POR) · JULY 6th · Rnd 8 of 13

Race 1 winner: Tom Sykes, Kawasaki

Race 2 winner: Jonathan Rea, Honda



MIXED BAG

UNPREDICTABLE STUFF IN PORTUGAL FOR WORLD SUPERBIKE AND IN CONDITIONS WHERE AS MUCH COULD BE LOST AS GAINED. SYKES AND REA RAN OUT WINNERS JUST BEFORE THE SERIES GOES TRANSATLANTIC

Photos by Honda Pro images, Kawasaki Racing Team, Milagro,
Ducati Corse Press, suzuki-racing.com, Aprilia Racing, GeeBee images



Jonathan Rea splashes back to the top of the podium and in conditions where he was able to overcome some of the Honda's limitation so far in 2014. Team-mate Leon Haslam was also in the top five



The distinctive drop down to Portimao's first turn; just one of the undulations that Tom Sykes allegedly feels is too limiting for modern superbike performance

WORLD SBK POR

eni

eni







A good day for Ducati and the first time since 2012 (at Portimao also) that both riders from the Bologna factory team have stood on the same podium, as Giugliano (top) and Davies sprayed champagne



Sykes on the crest. The Brit keeps a 43 point lead in the standings but will he keep a place on the SBK grid? MotoGP is calling as well as Honda to lure him away from Kawasaki



SBK CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

SBK RACE ONE RESULT

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	Aprilia
3	Loris Baz, FRA	Kawasaki
4	Marco Melandri, ITA	Aprilia
5	Jonathan Rea, GBR	Honda

SBK RACE TWO RESULT

Riders

1	Jonathan Rea, GBR	Honda
2	David Giugliano, ITA	Ducati
3	Chaz Davies, GBR	Ducati
4	Alex Lowes, GBR	Suzuki
5	Leon Haslam, GBR	Honda

SBK CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (7 of 14 rounds)

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	284
2	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	241
3	Loriz Baz, FRA	236
4	Jonathan Rea, GBR	235
5	Marco Melandri, ITA	192



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SECONDS OUT RND 2...

By Graeme Brown

At the start of the year there was a hint of personal needle amongst some of the Brits in the WSBK paddock. At the pre-event press conference in Australia there were a couple of sharp comments that made me wince but since then everything seems to have settled down. Until this weekend.

A war of words erupted on Twitter after Jonathan Rea's crew chief Chris Pike retweeted a link to an online story where Champion Tom Sykes had branded the Portimao track too extreme for a modern day Superbike – allegedly. Chris had commented “Really” and from there the wit and wisdom of the Twitterati was unleashed.

Jonathan himself chipped in early, followed by Eugene Laverty and Chaz Davies with Leon Haslam, Christian Iddon, Loris Baz and a whole host of fans joining in. Tom himself shot back “Keep bitching ladies” and there the fire was well and truly stoked.

At this weekend's pre-race 'press conference' – in reality a visit to the beach to drum up some interest in the event which fell mainly on sunburnt deaf ears – Tom was asked to clarify the situation and to be fair he stood by his original comment that with the power of the modern day Superbike the undulations that are more or less unique to the Algarve circuit, were a bit full on, a bit extreme, and that in a subsequent online report the comment had been taken a little out of context. It didn't, however, stop the 'banter', which was the main topic of gossip most of the weekend.

One user, @denkmit, amusingly suggested that the riders should have had a press conference in

their dressing gowns to solve the matter, referring back to an incident between Carl Fogarty and Frankie Chili at Assen in 1998 where the passionate Italian went to his motorhome after the race, took a shower, but didn't cool off and burst into a press conference in his dressing gown to carry on ranting.

In those days things were said face to face. Now with the advent of social media the sentiment in a comment is lost. If the boys had been sitting round the table having a beer and made those comments I don't think anyone would be talking about it. It wouldn't have been played out in public for start but on twitter you don't get to see the cheeky grin or the glint in the eye of someone dishing out some witty repost. It's all very sterile and can indeed be taken out of context.

What can't be denied is that any sporting arena needs good rivalries but they need to be on the field of play and not in the realms of the interweb. I want to see some handlebar to handlebar racing and a bit of needle on the podium afterwards as opposed to some social media banter, or is that a sign that I am getting old?

This week it is a quick rush home to turn around a suitcase of washing and head off to another 'extreme' track at Laguna Seca. The championship then takes a six week break till the beginning of September when we return to Jerez in Spain to start the final leg of the season. Unfortunately like everything else on your timeline, this weekend's spat will have been forgotten about. I would be quite happy to be racing every weekend now and see if we can get that rivalry played out on the track.



TEST



NEVER TOO OLD

ROLAND SQUEEZES ONTO YAMAHA'S LATEST 125 OFFERINGS THAT SHOULD CATER FOR A VARIETY OF TASTES WITH THOSE TAKING THEIR FIRST STEPS INTO MOTORCYCLING OR SEEKING A THRILL OF A DIFFERENT KIND

By Roland Brown, Photos by Francesc Montero and Sébas Romero

YAMAHA MT-125 & YZF-R125





Yamaha was in a terrible slump before starting a spectacular comeback a year ago, and there was one model with a tuning fork on its tank that shone through the gloom. The YZF-R125 topped sports bike sales charts in markets including the UK, and even went some way to justifying all that money spent on Rossi and Lorenzo's wages.

Given the race-replica's success and the fact that Yamaha's fightback has been led by the stunningly successful naked MT-09 and MT-07, the firm's next move was predictable: combine the YZF with the naked roadster format to create a small-capacity single called the MT-125. In fact the new MT was even more of a no-brainer than that because after six years in production the YZF was due an update. So the two 125cc models were developed together, sharing many parts including engines and most of their chassis. This allowed Yamaha to minimise costs and keep production in Europe (at the former MBK factory in France), rather than turn to Asian production as rival firms have done with bikes including KTM's Indian-built 125 Duke.

That shared motor is a reworked version of the original YZF's sohc, liquid-cooled unit, featur-

ing updates to the cylinder head, camshaft and clutch. Max output had to stay at 15bhp for licencing reasons but there's slightly more torque throughout the range, and Yamaha claims fuel economy is improved by over ten per cent.

Almost all of the two models' chassis are shared including the new frame that follows the traditional YZF format of twin steel main spars but is stiffer and holds thicker, 41mm upside-down forks. The rear shock, again shared by both, is surprisingly non-adjustable even for preload. Braking is updated, with a four-piston radial front caliper instead of the old model's twin-piston unit.

The MT's styling follows the family format, with plenty of sharp edges plus eye-catching air scoops on either side of the petrol tank. One of the YZF's assets has been that despite its small capacity it feels like a full-sized motorbike, and the same is true of the MT. Its one-piece handlebar gives an upright, fairly roomy riding position in conjunction with a seat that is slim but not notably low, though the bike's light weight — just 138kg with gas — ensures it's ultra manageable.


YAMAHA MT-125 & YZF-R125



PLAY





A rider wearing a white and black racing suit and a helmet with 'HJC' branding is riding a red and black Yamaha MT-125 motorcycle. The bike is shown in motion, leaning slightly to the left, with a blurred background of a brick building and a window. The motorcycle features a large, clear headlight, a black front fender, and a red fuel tank. The rider's left hand is on the handlebar, and their right leg is visible in blue jeans. The overall scene conveys a sense of speed and performance.

YAMAHA MT-125 & YZF-R125

***“Both models provide enough
rev-happy entertainment to
suggest they’ll contribute to
Yamaha’s recovery.”***



TEST

YAMAHA MT-125 & YZF-RT25



It's fun to ride, too, and respectably quick provided you're prepared to put in some effort. Fuelling is very clean, even from low revs, and the light controls help make the Yam pleasant and rider-friendly for urban use. But what power there is resides at the top of the rev range, so for rapid progress on the open road you have to keep the throttle pinned and make good use of the six-speed gearbox, which is thankfully precise.

Try accelerating out of turns with 6000rpm or less showing on the neat, smart-phone inspired digital instrument panel, and you'll be rewarded with a flat sound from the stubby exhaust and a distinct lack of forward progress. Keep things spinning near the 9000rpm power peak, though, and the Yamaha thrums along happily, staying relatively smooth and heading towards a top speed of 70mph.

Bends are good fun, too, thanks to the bike's light weight, and to geometry that seems to suit the MT slightly better than the revamped YZF. The naked single's wide bars give plenty of leverage, allowing easy handling, and the suspension copes with bumps better than its basic, non-adjustable nature might suggest, as well as giving a respectably smooth and comfortable ride.

There's plenty of ground clearance, and enough grip to make use of it despite the Michelins' narrow widths. And the front brake combines adequate power with plenty of feel, though it's a shame there's no ABS option yet. Detailing is mostly good, including the wide mirrors and the instrument panel, which includes info on fuel consumption — which is typically better than 100mpg.



TEST



Predictably, given the number of shared components, almost all the above also applies to the revamped YZF-R125, whose main differences include the full fairing and the slightly more leant-forward riding position dictated by clip-on handlebars. The improved aerodynamics help nudge top speed to 75mph, but the fairing's benefit will arguably be its weather protection on longer trips; against which the riding position is less comfortable in town.

The sports model also handles well, although its narrower bars gave a slightly less agile feel than the MT's, despite its identical chassis geometry. The test bike's front brake was slightly less sharp — surprisingly, because the components are identical. Despite that the YZF was a blast to ride, both on the road and in knee-down mode on a kart track outside Barcelona.

Both models provide enough rev-happy entertainment to suggest they'll contribute to Yamaha's recovery, especially as their prices are competitive, with the YZF remaining unchanged in most markets and the MT being usefully cheaper (at £3899 against £4349). Sometimes, it seems, the most obvious ideas are also the best.



YAMAHA MT-125 & YZF-R125



SCOTT

Scott's 2015 goggle range is almost ready to go and we received a sneak preview through a visit to their HQ in Switzerland directly after the Italian Grand Prix at Maggiora. The Hustle and Tyrant models get colour and design upgrades for the new year but the most interesting aspect of the fresh lines is the '89 Si Pro' which allows juniors to wear the same eyewear as athletes like Trey Canard, Clement Desalle, Tommy Searle and Arnaud Tonus.

Previously kids had to make-do with the single-block colours but now smaller versions of the two leading models for Scott (with patented fit system and venting) mean that extra element of cool for the young ones. Check out the 89Si Pros on these pages.







PRODUCTS



SHIFT

The new line-up for Shift involves three 'combative' labels in Assault (in green here), Strike (blue) and Faction (red). As the 'alternative' label as part of the Fox group Shift usually tackles a slight different look and feel compared to the Foxhead industry heavyweight apparel.

The Strike does the job for us...although Honda riders cannot go wrong with this version of the Faction. Have a look at the website for other items like body armour, freeride riding pants, caps, t-shirts and some hoodies.

www.shiftmx.com





BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls
Ray Archer





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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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